







\*478.-1882

# *Teaching and Healing*

## A SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE

INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CONGRESS

At St. Paul's Cathedral

*ON THE EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY*

AUGUST 7TH, 1881

BY

H. P. LIDDON, D.D.

CANON RESIDENTIARY OF ST. PAUL'S

Published by desire of the Executive Committee of the Congress

RIVINGTONS  
WATERLOO PLACE, LONDON

MDCCCLXXXI



## TEACHING AND HEALING

*“And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.”*

ST. MATT. ix. 35.

THERE can be no need for insisting on the importance of an occasion such as the present. No profession touches the outward conditions of human life more constantly and intimately than the profession of medicine; and when its foremost European representatives are assembled, under distinguished auspices, in this metropolis, to examine what their science has hitherto done towards relieving human suffering, and to decide what, with its present attainments and resources, it may yet hope to do, we all are interested as a matter of course. Heirs as we are, all of us, to the legacy of disease and pain, which comes down from the first fathers of our race, we welcome this serious and beneficent effort to review and marshal the accumulated stores of knowledge by which a kindly Providence enables man, not indeed to escape his inevitable doom, but to alleviate, to reduce

in area, to keep at bay, the physical sufferings which in the great majority of cases herald its approach. This great international meeting, where knowledge so precious to the well-being of our race is brought together, inspected, sifted, analysed, compared, and then consolidated and enhanced, is the common concern of the civilized world; and it is the special concern of this country, which has not been slow to express, through those who have a right to speak in its name, its sense of the respect which is due to its distinguished visitors, and to the errand on which they come.

Yet, at the outset of what I may have to say, it is right once more to note with thankful satisfaction the international character of this great gathering. Nations are the creations of Providence acting in history; they have their frontiers determined, sometimes by the limits of race and language, sometimes by the barriers of seas and mountains; they have, as nations, distinguishing characteristics for good and evil; and the feeling which binds a man to his country finds its divinely-appointed warrant in nature, not less truly than does that stronger feeling which binds him to his family. But as the family is greater than the man, and the nation than the family, so the human race represents a greatness which altogether transcends that of the nation. Here, in this temple of Jesus Christ, owning too as it does the name of the glorious Apostle whose life-work it was to break down those walls whereby Jewish nationalism would

fain have kept for ever the rest of the world at a distance from God—here, if anywhere, we may remember that there are truths and duties before which national barriers of feeling rightly disappear. Like those councils of the Church, which in ancient or later days have brought together representatives from countries and races parted by the prejudices and hostilities of ages; like the great heart of the apostle, which in the unity of the early Christian body could discern no difference between Greek and Jew, Barbarian and Scythian, slave and freeman;—a meeting such as the present rallies the thoughtful and benevolent forces of humanity on a splendid scale; it silences the jealousies, the misunderstandings, the quarrels which too often part and keep asunder even the elect of intelligence and goodness; and, in the double name of science and philanthropy, it presents an array of powerful and well-stored minds, such as, perhaps, never before met together in London, at least, for the purpose of doing the best that our modern world can do for the physical well-being of the human race.

## I.

Science and philanthropy, did I say? Yes; and it is a combination which at once carries us, over an interval of eighteen centuries, to the feet of Jesus of Nazareth, teaching in the assemblies, and healing the diseases of His contemporaries. In Him surely were allied the highest and largest knowledge, and

the most disinterested efforts for man's physical and moral welfare, that our earth has ever seen. "He went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every manner of disease among the people."

Consider the predominant character of His recorded miracles. If we adopt the common, but not altogether satisfactory division of them into works of power and works of mercy, there are of the former thirteen, and of the latter twenty-six. Of these last, three are eases of restoration to life; six are cures of demoniacs, in whom physical disorder was often strangely combined with moral obliquity; while seventeen of the patients that He cured might any day have presented themselves for treatment in a London hospital. Not only the blind, the deaf, the dumb, but leprosy, fever, paralysis, incurable weakness, dropsy, an issue of blood of twelve years' standing, a maimed limb, a laceration, passed under that tender and healing touch. And indeed some of His works of power, as they are called, over nature, had a like object with those miracles of healing mercy; as when, to allay human hunger, He fed the five and the four thousand, and procured a draught of fish where the toil of the fishermen had failed. These single acts were, each of them, merely samples of a habit. We all remember the hyperbolical reference to the number of our Lord's unrecorded works at the close of the fourth



Gospel ; \* and such passages as that before us show that the earlier writers of our Lord's life have only selected a few typical specimens of actions which were very numerous indeed.

Times indeed there were in His ministry, when it might even seem as though the human body had a greater claim on His attention than the human soul. Such was that occasion which St. Mark describes in the first chapter of his gospel, when St. Peter's mother-in-law had been just cured of a fever at Capernaum, and "at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto Him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils. And all the city was gathered together at the doors. And He healed many that were sick of divers diseases."† If we may reverently compare this scene with modern analogies, it bears less resemblance to anything in the life of a clergyman than to the occupation of a physician to a hospital on the day of his seeing his out-patients. There is indeed all the difference in the world between the best professional advice, and summary cure such as our Lord's ; but we are for the moment only looking at the outward aspects of the scene, and it shows very vividly how largely our Lord's attention was given to the well-being of the bodily frame of man.

Now it would be a mistake to imagine that this feature of our Lord's ministry was accidental or inevitable. Nothing in His work was accident. All

\* St. John xxi. 25.

† St. Mark i. 32-34.

was deliberate, and had an object. Nothing in His work was inevitable, except so far as it was freely dictated by His wisdom and His mercy. To suppose that this union in Him of prophet and physician was determined by the necessities of a rude civilization, such as that of certain tribes in Africa and elsewhere, or of certain periods and places in mediæval Europe, when knowledge was scanty, and it was easy and needful for a single person, at each social centre, to master all that was known on two or three great subjects, is to make a supposition which does not apply to Palestine at the time of our Lord's appearance. The later prophets, all of them, were prophets, and nothing more; neither legislators, nor statesmen, nor physicians. In John the Baptist we see no trace of the restorative powers exerted on rare occasions by Elijah and Elisha; and when our Lord appeared, dispensing on every side cures for bodily disease, the sight was as novel to His contemporaries as it was welcome. Nor are His healing works to be accounted for by saying that they were only designed to draw attention to His message, by certifying His authority to deliver it, or by saying that they were only symbols in its many and varying aspects of a higher work which He had more at heart—the work of healing the diseases of the human soul. True it is that Christ's healing activity had this double value. It *was* evidence of His authority as a divine Teacher; it *was* a picture in detail, addressed to sense, of that which, as Redeemer of our race, He meant to do in

regions beyond the sphere of sense ; but these aspects of His care for the human body were not primary, they were incidental. We may affirm reverently, but with certainty, that His first object was to show Himself as the Deliverer and Restorer of human nature as a whole ; not of the reason and conscience merely, without the imagination and the affections ; not of the spiritual side of man's nature without the bodily. Therefore He was not only Teacher but Physician, and therefore and thus He has shed upon the medical profession, to the end of time, a radiance and a consecration which is ultimately due to the conditions of that Redemptive work, to achieve which He Himself came down from heaven.

## II.

“Teaching and healing.” This, the motto of our Lord's life, is the motto also of the profession of medicine. It also not merely heals but teaches ; it also is, in its way, a prophet, with truths and virtues specially entrusted to it, that it may recommend and propagate them.

1. It is little to say of this great profession in our day, that it is a keeper and teacher of intellectual truth. We all know that it has furnished of late years to literature some of the most enterprising efforts in the way of speculative thought ; and the remarkable Address with which this Congress was

opened will have informed the public generally, while it vividly reminded the audience which listened to it, of the vast additions that within the last score of years medical science has made to human knowledge, and of the immense perspectives that are opening before it. On these high themes it would be impossible to dwell here ; but it may be allowable and sufficient to say, that as a permanent teacher of truth, medical science has powers and responsibilities which are all its own.

The physician can point out, with an authority given to few other men, the present operative force of some of the laws of God. The laws of nature, as we call them—its observed uniformities—are not less the laws and will of God than the ten commandments. Nay, that moral law finds its echo and countersign in this physical world. It is justified by the natural catastrophes which follow on its neglect. It is not the clergyman but the physician who can demonstrate the sure connection between unrestrained indulgence and the decay of health and life ; who can put his finger upon the real causes which too often fill, not only our hospitals, but our lunatic asylums, with strong young men ; or who can illustrate, by instances drawn from experience, the tender foresight of moral provisions, which at first sight may appear tyrannical or capricious. To be able to show this in detail, to give men thus the physical reason for moral truth ;—this is a great prophetic power, a vast capacity, which we in this pulpit might well envy in its posses-

sors ; it is a grave responsibility for which those who wield it, like other prophets, must one day give account.

The physician can trace, with an authority which is felt to be so real in no other man of science, the true limits of human knowledge. He knows that to-day science is as ignorant as she was 2000 years ago of what life in its essence is. Of the physical conditions under which life exists, science has very much that is wonderful to say ; and, indeed, she has just been telling us that life, viewed on its physical side, is "the sum of the joint action of all parts of the human system, of the higher or vital ones as well as of the lower or inferior ; that there is no one seat of life, since every elementary part, every cell, is a seat of life." We listen with sincere respect and interest ; but we observe that this only states, in language of beautiful precision, what are the points of contact between life and the animal organism : we still ask what life is in itself, and we hear no answer. No. Just as science pauses before each atom of matter, unable to satisfy herself whether it be infinitely divisible or not, so, when she has exhausted the skill of the anatomist in endeavouring to surprise the life-principle in some secret recesses of the animal frame, she again must pause to confess that the constitutive essence of the life-principle itself is a mystery beyond her ken. And never is science more worthy of her prophetic office than when she dares to make this confession. True science, like prophecy, from Moses

downwards, knows not merely what she knows, but the limits of her knowledge ; and when she is tempted, if ever, to forget this, as by him who whispered into the ear of the dying Laplace, some praise of her reputation which has seemed to ignore it, she replies, with the great Frenchman, "My friend, pray don't speak thus. That which we know is little enough ; that of which we are ignorant is enormous."

The physician is a prophet ; and this character is never so apparent as when life is drawing towards its close. Often when to the sanguine ignorance of friends, the bright eye and the buoyant step seem to forbid serious apprehension, medical science already hears not uncertainly the approaching footsteps of death. There is a point at which all forms of highly-cultivated knowledge become instincts ; they are certain of their judgments, even when not able to produce a reason. And no man can have passed middle life without being struck with the sort of second sight, as it may well seem, which is at the command of an accomplished physician. Would that I might be permitted, in the freedom of my ministry, to say a word as to the use of this tremendous power ! Too often, when science knows that death is inevitable, the dying man is allowed to cherish hopes of life, with a view to possibly prolonging for a few more days or hours the struggle for physical existence ; and thus the precious, the irrevocable moments pass, during which the soul, by acts of faith, and hope, and love, and contrition, might unite itself to



the Divine Redeemer, and prepare itself for the presence-chamber of the Judge. Brethren, it is not for this that your higher knowledge is given you ; it is not for this that the departed will thank you when you too meet them in the world of spirits.

2. But the medical profession may also be a great teacher of reverence. Whatever else may be said of our age, reverence is not one of its leading characteristics. We have, as we think, explored, examined, appraised all the sublimities, all the sanctities, all the mysteries that commanded the awe of our less cultivated or less inquisitive forefathers ; and, as a generation, we have ceased to revere. And surely this absence of reverence is a moral loss. What is reverence ? It is the sincere, instinctive acknowledgment of a higher greatness, which attracts and awes the mind that gazes on it. We grow up insensibly towards that which we revere ; and to revere nothing is to fall back upon self as the best standard of attainable excellence, and to be dwarfed and blighted proportionately. Now, the profession of medicine is, or should be, an apostolate of reverence ; for its field of action is the human body ; and in no other school may reverence be learned more surely than here.

We Christians have indeed, to speak frankly, our own reasons for thinking this. As we contemplate the human body, we cannot forget what our faith teaches us about its origin, its present purpose, and its coming destiny.

We know that the body, like the soul, is from God. It is perhaps His noblest handiwork on earth. No lines of beauty, it has been said by a great writer, rival those of the human form. No mechanism in any other animal is so perfect. For our part, as we contemplate the human body, we cannot forget its Author. Even if evolution should win for itself a permanent place in our conceptions of the past history of man, it would still leave untouched the great question of man's origin. When every step of the process, continued through ages, shall have been elaborated by science, the question will still remain, Who furnished the original material, the primal monad? Who gave the impact which set the process in motion? Who prescribed the evolutionary law? who governed its application? Above all, who intervened, at a critical moment, to endow the subject of this evolution with a spiritual and reflective faculty, making him thus to differ, not in degree, but in kind, from the creatures around him? That which gives every work of God its first title to interest, namely, the fact that it is His work, confers this title with especial emphasis on the human body.

Then, next, what is the present function of the body? Christians see in it at once a tabernacle and an instrument. It is the tabernacle of the soul. That the soul is distinct from it; that that in us which consciously perceives, thinks, wills, acts; which knows itself to be one and identical, from week to week, and from year to year, while the body is



perpetually changing both its substance and its outward mien—this is for us a fact of experience. In order to be certain of it we do not need a Revelation. We know that we cannot understand the functions of the body unless we know something of the functioning organs; that, for example, we know nothing of the circulation of the blood unless we know what the heart is, and the arteries and the veins. But we can understand the intellectual and moral faculties; we can arrange, and analyze, and appreciate them, while we are altogether in ignorance of the nature and functions of the brain. In short, we are conscious that the “I,” which is the seat and centre of these faculties, is radically distinct from the bodily organism which is most immediately related to it, but which unquestionably is related to it, partly as a tabernacle, and partly as an instrument. The soul inhabits and employs the body; the body is the veil and the interpretation of the soul. Who does not know how the soul of man speaks through the voice, with its intonations varying from moment to moment according to the dictates from within? Who has not felt how the soul of man speaks through the eye? how, when the eye is dull and languid, when it is bright and animated, when it flashes fire and passion, these are moods of the immortal spirit within? And who does not perceive the eloquence of gesture—especially of involuntary gesture? it also is the language of something more than matter and force. We note its successive phases of energy and repose,

of suggestiveness and insistance, of conciliation and defiance; and we read, in characters not to be mistaken, the language of the being that dwells within the frame whose movements it thus controls. More than this, we Christians believe that this tenant of our material frames may and does itself become the sharer of a life higher than its own; that our bodies are temples of the Eternal Spirit, because He, in a way which we cannot understand, makes our spirits His temples; and thus the body is, in our eyes, itself precious and saered, an object of true reverence, if only by reason of Him Whom it thus veils and serves.

Again, there is the destiny of the body. As we Christians gaze on it, we know that there awaits it the humiliation of death and decay; we know that it will be resolved into its chemical constituents; but we look beyond; we know also that it has a future. Beyond the hour of death is the hour of the resurrection; beyond the humiliation of the coffin and the grave there is the life which will not die. The reconstruction of the decayed body presents to us no greater difficulty than its original creation. If we ask the question how it will be; we are told, upon what is for us sufficeient authority, that "our Lord Jesus Christ shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." \* Thus in this life

\* Phil. iii. 21.

the body is like a child who has great prospects before him, and we respect it accordingly.

But you, gentlemen, can add to these motives for reverence another which appeals not to faith, but to experience. It has been finely said, that among the students of nature irreverence is possible only to the superficial. You are too conscious of the great powers in whose presence you move and work, of the mysteries above, around, within you, of the magnificent and exhaustless subject, whose fringes you seem only to have touched when you know most about it, to escape from the awe, which all true knowledge, with its ever-present consciousness of a larger ignorance, must always inspire. In this matter science, whatever be her immediate interest, is ever the same. You can understand Newton comparing his finest achievements to the child playing with the waves as they break upon the sand; and as you move along the awful frontier where the world of matter shades off into the world of spirit, not the least service that you can do to the men of this generation is by teaching them the mysteriousness of what they see and are, to prepare them to do justice to what Revelation has to say about what they do not see, and what they will be.

3. Lastly, the profession of medicine is, from the nature, I had almost said the necessity of the case, a teacher of benevolence.

Often may we have witnessed the transformation—one of the most striking and beautiful to be seen

in life—by which the medical student becomes the medical practitioner. We may have known a medical student who is reckless, selfish, or worse; and we presently behold him, as a medical practitioner, leading a more unselfish and devoted life than any other member of society. What, we ask, is this something akin to ministerial ordination that has wrought the surprising change, and brought with it such an inspiration of tenderness and sympathy? The answer apparently is, that now, as a practitioner, he approaches human suffering from a new point of view. As a student, he looked on it as something to be observed, discussed, analysed, lectured upon, examined in. As a practitioner, he is absorbed with the idea that it is something to be relieved. This new point of view, so profoundly Christian, will often take possession of a man's whole moral nature, and give it a totally new direction; and thus, as a rule, the medical practitioner is at once a master and a teacher of benevolence. Not only or chiefly the great heads and lights of the profession, whose names are household words in all the universities of Europe, and who have their reward in a homage which neither wealth nor birth can possibly command; but also—at least in this country and pre-eminently—the obscure country doctor, whose sphere of fame is his parish or his neighbourhood. Upon him the sun of publicity rarely or never sheds its rays; his life is passed chiefly in the homes of the very poor, and amidst acts of the kindest and most self-sacrificing service; for him

the loss of rest and the loss of health is too often nothing less than a law of his work ; and as he pursues his beneficent but humble career from day to day, his left hand rarely knows what his right hand doeth. Yet surely such men as these, in the words of Ecclesiasticus, "maintain the state of the world, while all their desire is in the work of their craft."\* They pour oil and wine, as can or do few or none others, into the gaping wounds of our social system ; they bind and heal not merely the limbs of their patients, but the more formidable fractures which separate class from class ; and, unless He Whom now we worship on His throne in heaven is very unlike all that He was eighteen hundred years since on earth, such lives as these must be, in not a few cases, very welcome to Him, if only for the reason that they are so like one conspicuous aspect of His own.

May I add one word ? If it is knowledge which makes the profession of medicine so capable of a lofty and practical benevolence, must we not trust that this knowledge may not be purchased at the cost of the very virtue which it promotes ? It would ill become me to attempt to suggest in detail what pathological experiments are necessary and legitimate ; but may it not be said that such experiments are only justified, if at all, by some recognized philanthropic aim, as distinct from the general instinct of scientific curiosity ?

\* Ecclesiasticus xxxviii. 34.

Occasions like the present always recall the memories of the dead; and it is impossible not to think of two Englishmen among others, who were still living a few months since, and who, had they still been here, would have welcomed and been welcomed by this Congress with no stinted enthusiasm. If, as having had the happiness of knowing them, I recall their names, it is because in their several ways they illustrate remarkably those aspects of the medical profession to which your attention has been just directed.

Of these one represented the speculative and scientific rather than the practical side of the profession. He filled with great distinction a chair at Oxford, and devoted himself with unwearied industry to all that could illustrate the past history of man. He was almost as much at home in the early formations of language as among the skulls and bones which might be unearthed in a Yorkshire barrow; and nothing was trivial for a mind which believed firmly in the unity of truth, and in the value of all contributions, of whatever kind, towards attaining it. But that which should be especially recalled here and to-day is his reverent bearing as he traversed the obscure region which divides the physical from the supersensuous world; his resolute faith in immaterial existences; his profound sense of overawing mystery everywhere penetrating the great subject which was entrusted to his skill; the childlike consciousness that he was beginning to learn, when to others he seemed



to be already a master of sentences. Long will his University and his country mourn the late Professor Rolleston.\*

And the other of whom I am thinking, and who was the first to leave us, illustrates by his career no less remarkably the connection between the medical profession and active philanthropy. Whether it was within the walls of Kars, or on the later battle-fields of the Danube, wherever there was suffering, wherever there was oppression and wrong, the quick eye and

\* Dr. Acland permits me to subjoin the following illustration of the remark in the text :—

The day before Dr. Rolleston's death, which was one of suffering and distress, he had been speaking in his bright way of politics, and of the Whigs in the time of Lord Sidmouth.

A friend (Dr. Acland), who with his sister was sitting with him, remarked that he had often wondered which were the more congenial to Dr. Rolleston's mind—political or scientific problems?

"Politics" —

"Politics *certainly*," he said.

For some minutes he lay still, and then suddenly, slowly, in the most deliberate and clear manner, he said :

"Nature is the art of God. You know that.†

"Politics is the art of man. I am fit for the one ; I cannot grapple with the other.

"Any man of uprightness and sense can, with prayer, go right in politics. Without prayer he will be liable to perversions which he might have escaped. I cannot fathom the ways of the Infinite. Nature is all too vast.

"Lo, these are parts of His ways ; how little a portion is heard of Him."

His friend, impressed by his solemn force, and his clear utterance, said, "These last words were formerly inscribed in the Christ Church Museum. I went lately to see if they were there still. They were gone."

"Most certainly," he said, "I did not remove them."

H. A.

† Referring to old discussions on the expressions of Sir Thomas Browne.

tender heart of Dr. Humphry Sandwith were ready for even heroic service. For him medicine was ever the right hand of philanthropy, and his philanthropy was quickened by a keen sense of social and human justice. Many years, too, will pass before a life so unselfish in its aims as his can pass from memory.

Whatever else may be said of a cosmopolitan meeting like the present, this assuredly may be said of it, that its members will not meet again in this life. In a few hours, gentlemen, you will be on your way to all quarters of the civilised world, bearing with you, let us trust, solid additions to the knowledge which you have brought us, and cherishing kindly memories of this great city, and of the English people. But you will never, all of you, meet again. This solemn thought must surely deepen the sense of responsibility with which you address yourselves anew to your work as teachers of truth, or as pioneers of philanthropy. The two objects are, in the last analysis—one, Never forget, that there is a truth beyond and higher than the truths of physics; that there is a better and brighter world than the world of sense. Of that world our Divine Redeemer did not lose sight when He healed the woes of this; and medical science will assert, in the long run, its true claims to human admiration and gratitude, when it keeps its eye upon those summits of truth to which indeed it may most persuasively point us on, but which we reach under the guidance of faith.









